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*Smallpox at Dixon, Ill.*

[Telegram.]

CHICAGO, ILL., *December 3, 1899.*

At least 125 cases of smallpox at Dixon, Ill. Disease has prevailed for past two months and treated as chicken pox. This information received from Chief Medical Inspector Spalding, of Chicago. Just returned from Dixon.

SAWTELLE, *Surgeon.*

*Yellow fever in the United States as reported to the Surgeon-General United States Marine-Hospital Service from August 31 to December 8, 1899.*

| Places.               | Date.                 | Cases. | Deaths. |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------|---------|
| Florida:              |                       |        |         |
| Key West.....         | Aug. 31-Sept. 30....  | 859    | 46      |
|                       | Oct. 1-Oct. 31.....   | 432    | 20      |
|                       | Nov. 1-Nov. 20.....   | 25     | 2       |
| Miami.....            | Sept. 5-Sept. 22....  | 2      | 1       |
|                       | Oct. 19-Oct. 31.....  | 45     | 2       |
|                       | Nov. 1-Nov. 22.....   | 86     | 7       |
| Port Tampa City.....  | Sept. 4-Nov. 16....   | 10     | 1       |
| Louisiana:            |                       |        |         |
| New Orleans.....      | Aug. 27-Sept. 30....  | 31     | 7       |
|                       | Oct. 2-Oct. 31.....   | 73     | 9       |
|                       | Nov. 3-Nov. 10....    | 9      | 4       |
| Maryland:             |                       |        |         |
| Baltimore.....        | Oct. 8.....           | α 1    | 1       |
| Mississippi:          |                       |        |         |
| Centerville.....      | Sept. 29.....         | 2      | .....   |
| Flora.....            | Oct. 25.....          | (b)    | .....   |
| Jackson.....          | Sept. 10-Oct. 30....  | 55     | 8       |
|                       | Oct. 31-Nov. 1....    | 6      | 1       |
| Mississippi City..... | Sept. 1.....          | 1      | 1       |
|                       | Sept. 14-Sept. 29.... | 26     | 1       |

α At quarantine station. b Yellow fever reported.

## VITAL STATISTICS.

The following is an extract from the "Bulletin of the Indiana State board of health" for the quarter ended September 30, 1899:

Such legislation might well be imitated by all States which have no law requiring the collection of mortality statistics.

The last legislature made Indiana a registration State by passing a law which makes it possible to collect correct mortality statistics. It is the duty of the State health department to enforce this law under the directions of the State board of health. Over three months ago all county health officers were ordered to organize their counties by seeing to it that all incorporated cities and towns organized health boards and appointed health officers, as the law commands; also, to appoint deputies in all nonincorporated towns, and furnish a complete list of all reporting stations, with the names of their officers. This work was satisfactorily accomplished by September 10, and by the 20th all necessary blanks, with full directions, were furnished to every reporter of vital statistics in the State. The number of reporting stations is 765, and the work of collecting deaths commenced October 1. As was expected, despite the fact that directions given were plain and simple, numerous letters came to hand asking questions which had been anticipated and which were fully answered in the official instructions. All seems to be now moving smoothly, but in some counties coronial disinterments have

been necessitated by failure or neglect of the attending physician to make out a death certificate as required, and on account of burial without a permit. As all physicians were fully informed of their duty, and were furnished with death-report blanks and a copy of the law, it is hard to understand why any were found who would through failure of their duty bring upon the families which employed them such trouble as a disinterment and inquest. Physicians must respect and obey the law as other citizens.

Whether the law is reasonable or not is a question to be answered solely by the legislature, and the question of constitutionality must, according to the constitution, be decided by the courts. Until settled in the courts all laws must be obeyed, and will be by all good citizens. Attorney-General Hord in an official opinion says the statute requiring physicians to report deaths, births, and contagious diseases occurring under their supervision is constitutional, and in the course of his opinion remarks as follows: "We need not inquire whether the provisions of the statute are unjust or oppressive. These matters are for the consideration of the government. We may observe that it is difficult to discover oppression or injustice in requiring the medical profession to make known to the world statistics which may promote, and are promoting the public health. A physician should honestly endeavor to obtain and report all information required by the regulations of the statute and the board of health. This is his duty as a physician, and is imposed as an obligation by the ethics of the useful and honorable profession of which he is a member. The statute confers on a physician certain privileges, and may impose corresponding duties."

*Disagreeable.*—It will, of course, be disagreeable to prosecute a brother physician or any other person, but health officers have duties and should not hesitate, if occasion demands, to enforce the law. Those physicians who may bring upon their "families" disinterment and inquest can not be regarded as worthy members of the medical profession, and such will undoubtedly receive their reward. Following are forms of affidavits drawn up by the attorney-general, which are to be used when it is required to file against any physician for failure to report deaths, births, and contagious diseases. We hope all health officers will not hesitate to enforce the law and so command the full respect of every one.

#### AFFIDAVIT OF FAILURE TO REPORT DEATHS.

STATE OF INDIANA, }  
 \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY, } ss:

\_\_\_\_\_, being duly sworn, on his oath says that on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, at the county of \_\_\_\_\_, and State of Indiana, one \_\_\_\_\_, being then and there a physician of such county, in attendance upon one \_\_\_\_\_ at his death, which occurred under the supervision of such \_\_\_\_\_, in said county and State, on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, did then and there, and at all times since, unlawfully fail and neglect to report to the secretary of the board of health of the \_\_\_\_\_ in which such death occurred, such death, with a certificate of the cause of death, and such correlative facts as are required in the blank forms furnished by the State board of health, contrary to the form of the statute in such case made and provided, and against the peace and dignity of the State of Indiana.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Justice of the Peace.

## AFFIDAVIT OF FAILURE TO RETURN BIRTH.

STATE OF INDIANA, } ss:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY,

\_\_\_\_\_, being duly sworn, on his oath says that on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, at the county of \_\_\_\_\_, and State of Indiana, one \_\_\_\_\_, a physician and accoucheur, of the State of Indiana, being in attendance as physician and accoucheur upon one \_\_\_\_\_ who then and there gave birth to a child, which birth occurred under the supervision of such \_\_\_\_\_, in said county and State, on the day named, and then and there, and at all times since, did unlawfully fail and neglect to report to the secretary of the board of health of the \_\_\_\_\_ in which such birth occurred, such birth, or any of the correlative facts required in the blank forms furnished by the State board of health, contrary to the form of the statute in such case made and provided, and against the peace and dignity of the State of Indiana.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Justice of the Peace.*

## AFFIDAVIT OF FAILURE TO REPORT CONTAGIOUS DISEASE.

STATE OF INDIANA, } ss:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY,

\_\_\_\_\_, being duly sworn, on his oath says that on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, at the county of \_\_\_\_\_, and State of Indiana, one \_\_\_\_\_, being then and there a physician of such county, in attendance upon one \_\_\_\_\_ who was then and there afflicted with \_\_\_\_\_ which has been specified by the board of health as a contagious disease, such patient being under the supervision of such \_\_\_\_\_, did then and there, and at all times since, unlawfully fail and neglect to report to the secretary of the board of health of the \_\_\_\_\_ in which such sick person was under the supervision of said \_\_\_\_\_, and such correlative facts as are required by the blank forms furnished by the State board of health, contrary to the form of the statute in such case made and provided, and against the peace and dignity of the State of Indiana.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Justice of the Peace.*

## PORTO RICO.

*Report from Ponce.*

PONCE, PORTO RICO, *November 20, 1899.*

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith the weekly quarantine and abstract of bills of health reports for the week ended November 18. Also mortality report for the two weeks ended on the same date.

The general health of Ponce shows little change. There has been a great deal of sickness and suffering among the poor since the hurricane, the sickness being principally gastro-intestinal disorders. The 1 case of smallpox reported occurred in the district, a great distance from the city and port.

The steamer *Maria Herrera*, from Cuban ports, came in this week not disinfected, as usual, at Santiago, and carrying nonimmune passengers. She was held two days in quarantine to complete the five-day period from Santiago, and the baggage of passengers for this port was inspected and disinfected where necessary. Most of the baggage had been disinfected at ports of embarkation.

Respectfully,

C. H. LAVINDER,  
*Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.*